

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd *June* 1. 1699.

A T  
Feckenham

I N  
*WORCESTER-SHIRE,*

Before the Trustees appointed by  
*Sir Thomas Cookes, K<sup>t</sup>. Bart.*

To Manage his Charity given to that Place.

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By JOHN BARON, M. A. and Fellow  
of *Balliol College in Oxford.*

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*To him that soweth Righteousness, shall be a sure Re-  
ward. Prov. 11. 18.*

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O X F O R D,  
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To the Right Worshipful  
**Sir Tho. Cookes,**

O F

**B E N T L E T,** Knight-Baronet.

S I R,

**I** Hope You will not be surpriz'd, when You find your Name set before the following Discourse. As it was Preach'd at your Request, so I think I have no reason to doubt of Your favourable Acceptance of it ; especially since I know You are perswaded, that the Doctrines contain'd in it, are both sound and seasonable.

The Charitable Settlements which You have already made, are a sufficient Argument, that You firmly believe Good Works to be absolutely necessary to Salvation ; and Your very earnest Desire of perfecting Your more noble Designs, notwithstanding the Discouragements You have met with, farther shew, that You look upon the time of Life to be the most proper, if not the only time of doing good.

As

( )

*As far as I remember, I have never seen any  
just Discourse on this Subject; and I heartily  
wish, what I have here said, may answer my  
chief design in the Publication of it, which is,  
that I may convince Men of Ability of the dan-  
ger of delaying their Charity till they dye. If I  
should not be so happy as to succeed herein, it will  
yet be a great satisfaction to me to consider, that  
I have so fair an opportunity of acknowledging  
Your generous Kindness to me, and of assuring  
You withal, that I am,*

Honour'd SIR,

Your very Humble Servant,

*Ball. Coll. Oxford }  
July 11. 1699. }*

JOHN BARON.



G A L. Chap. VI. Ver. 10.

*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.*

**I**N these Words there are three things contain'd,

- I. A Duty recommended.
- II. The Extent of this Duty.
- III. The proper Time of performing it.

I. The Duty here recommended is that most excellent one of doing good, to which we are indispensably oblig'd, both by the Principles of natural and reveal'd Religion. Right Reason directs us to it, Almighty God has expressly commanded it, our blessed Saviour, while he was upon Earth, exemplify'd it to us, for *he went about doing good*, Act. 10. 38. and he has likewise assured us all, who are call'd by his holy Name, that we must be exercis'd in it, if we desire or hope at the last day to give up our Accounts with joy, and not with grief. Notwithstanding the great heats that have been rais'd about Justification, herein all agree that good Works are the necessary visible Fruits,

B where-

whereby the sincerity of our Hearts may be known; without these our Hope is Presumption, our Assurance nothing but a groundless Confidence, and our Faith absolutely ineffectual. *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,* Jam. 2. 26.

II. The second thing to be observed is the universal Extent of this great Duty, express'd in these words, *Let us do good unto all men.* Our Kindness must be extended as the Blessings of Heaven are, and the displays of our Love must reach like those of the Sun in the Firmament, to the just and the unjust. For we are all Brethren, descended from the same common Stock; and he that is afar off, as well as he that is near, is (according to the Christian interpretation of the word) our Neighbour.

'Tis true indeed the proud and ill-natur'd *Pharisees* of old, restrain'd the fence of this Word, and accordingly confin'd their Charity and Mercy within the narrow limits of their own Nation: But he who came *to fulfil the Law*, to supply what was wanting, and to explain what they by their false Glosses and ill-grounded Comments had darkned and perplexed; He who was *the way, the truth, and the life*, has taught us by the Parable of the good Samaritan taking pity on a Stranger, that fell among

Job. 14.  
6.

Luk. 10  
30.

among Thieves, that under the Gospel every Person, who stands in need of our relief, tho' he be as great an Adversary to us, as a *Jew* to a *Samaritan*, must yet be looked upon as the object of our Compassion and Mercy, and of any charitable acts, which he can receive, and we perform.

III. The third thing to be observed is the proper time of performing this Duty, which is, *when and while we have opportunity*. For though to do good to all Men, be a Duty incumbent upon us, yet we are not at all times equally oblig'd to the exercise of it. The cries of some that want, never come to our ears, and the necessities of others may be so great, that we are not able to relieve them. No Man can be oblig'd beyond his knowledge and power, neither will much be requir'd of him, to whom little has been given. The Apostle therefore saith, *ὡς ἔχουσιν ἰσχύοντες*, *As we have opportunity*, let us do good unto all Men. The old Version is, *while we have time*; Dr. Hammond renders it, *as we have ability*; Grotius his Note upon the place is, *Dum manet hæc vita, While we are alive*. All these put together will compleat the signification of the Word: for after death we can do nothing, and in this Life we can then only be said to have an *opportunity* offered us

of doing good, when the wants of others, and our own plenty meet together. So that what *St. Paul* here presses, from the certainty of a reward, which we shall reap in due time, if we faint not, is, That we be merciful *after our power*, and so far as we have ability, embrace every opportunity of doing good *while we live*.

These things being premised, that my following Discourse may the better suit with the present occasion, I shall endeavour to shew,

1. That 'tis upon several accounts more advisable for *Men of Ability*, to dispose of what they intend for charitable Uses *in their Life time*, than to leave it to be manag'd by others after their *Death*.

2. That Men of Ability are in Duty oblig'd to do good *while they live*.

3. I shall speak of the peculiar excellency and usefulness of those charitable Settlements, which are design'd to promote and encourage Learning.

4. And lastly, I shall enquire what is the Duty of all those, who more immediately enjoy the Benefit and Advantages of such Foundations.

First I am to shew that it is upon several accounts more advisable for *Men of Ability*, to dispose of what they intend for charitable Uses *in their Life time*, than to leave it to be manag'd by others after their *Death*. This

This Proposition I hope to make good from the following Considerations:

1. That it is utterly uncertain, whether that which *Men of Ability* leave to the disposal of *others*, be ever settled according to their original design and intent.

2. It is a greater Argument of a free and generous Mind, to dispose of what they design for charitable Uses *while they live*, than to leave it to be manag'd by others after their *Death*.

3. It shews they firmly trust in, and more entirely rely upon the good Providence of God.

4. It may conduce very much to the raising of their Affections from things below, and placing them on things above.

5. By settling what they design for charitable Uses *while they live*, they will in all probability derive a Blessing upon themselves for the remainder of their Lives.

6. And lastly, The Reflection upon what good they have done, will afford them great comfort and satisfaction when they come to dye.

1. In the first place it should be considered by *Men of Ability*, that it is utterly uncertain, whether what they leave to the disposal of *others*, be ever settled according to their original design and intent. For a Man's Will may be stified or perverted; it may be the interest of  
some



some, that it never see light, of others, that it be interpreted quite contrary to the intention of the Testator. A Son does not always inherit the Vertues of his Father, and those generous Principles whereby the one was governed, are many times found to have little or no influence on the other. If this should be the case, if *the Son's eye should be evil, because his Father's is good*; we must expect to see him, instead of fulfilling his Will, making a thousand trifling scruples against it. Either he will except to some particular Clauses of it; or by objecting the contradiction and inconsistency of its parts, he will at one stroke attempt to invalidate and overthrow the whole. Like the *unfaithful Disciple*, he reckons all wasted that is set aside for God's Service; and thinks his Father's giving any thing to the Church or Poor, is a direct robbing of his own Children or Relations, and consequently a sufficient Argument that he was not in his right Mind.

If the trust and execution be lodged in extraneous hands, which have no such immediate relation to the Testator, they also may be careless and negligent, ignorant and unskilful, Men that don't love, or don't understand business; they may disagree among themselves, or have private ends of their own to promote. These are no impertinent, impossible, or maliciously con-

contrived suppositions, as appears from the frequency of Commissions for charitable Uses, and the many Years distance between the Death of some Donours, and the compleat settlement of their Benefactions.

After all, Admit that none of these things should happen, but that the Executors, out of a sence of their Duty, should resolve to use their utmost diligence, in order to the settling every thing as it was design'd ; yet the Charity it self may be such as cannot be so employ'd. When it comes to be put in practice, it may be found contrary to some Constitution of the Realm, or it may be inconsistent with the Customes or Priviledges of the Body or Society, for which it was originally intended. There may be several other impediments, which while the Charity was only in *Theory* or design, could not be foreseen or prevented.

The Civil Law indeed in such cases directs very well, that when what is given for any special or determinate Use, cannot be so applied, it may be dispos'd of otherwise, as shall be thought most necessary for the publick good. I think our Laws likewise make some such provision : nevertheless it is still most advisable for Men of Ability, to fix what they design for Charity *in their Life time*. For by this means, if one way be observed unlikely to take effect,  
they



they may immediately resolve upon another. They may review their Settlement when it is made, they may add to it, they may correct, alter or explain what they please in it, and at last leave it entirely to their own satisfaction.

It is to my purpose, and therefore I must by no means forget to observe here, what unexpected hindrances that *Honourable Person*, who has already been a great Benefactor to this place, has met with; which though they have created him much trouble and uneasiness, yet I have all imaginable assurance, that his Heart is still fixed and ready; and I do not question but his more diffusive Charity will in a short time be firmly settled in *Oxford*, which he has long since designed, as a completion of his other good Works, so beneficial to, and by the care of his *worthy Trustees*, and *skilful Masters*, so successfully carry'd on in this County.

2. The second Consideration I would propose to *Men of Ability*, is this, That it is a greater Argument of a free and liberal Heart, to dispose of what they intend for charitable Uses *while they live*, than to leave it to be manag'd by others after their *death*.

'Tis certain that God has a peculiar regard to the thoughts and intents of their Hearts, and 'tis no less certain, that that onely will be accepted and rewarded by him, which they dispose

dispose of *not grudgingly or of necessity*, but with a free and ready Mind : *for God loveth a cheerful giver*, 2 Cor. 9. 7.

Now those who seek and embrace every opportunity of employing what they design for charitable Uses *while they live*, do abundantly evidence this readiness and cheerfulness in giving. Whereas such as leave their Charity to be distributed by others after their *Death*, which they might conveniently dispose of themselves whilst *alive*, seem to have a certain secret reserve, that the World shall never be the better for what they possess, so long as they can reap any benefit from it themselves ; and by resolving to give part of their Substance when they *dye*, they do in effect resolve to give nothing while they *live*.

As therefore we pass not the best Complement, and consequently lay no very great Obligation upon our Friends, by offering them what we cannot any longer keep or make use of : So in the esteem of all indifferent Men, there is little generosity in him, who adjourns his Charity, as Sinners commonly do their Repentance, not to a more convenient season, for the present will be always equally inconvenient, but to the very utmost extent of Nature, and at last goes naked out of this World, merely because he can't carry his *Mammon of unrighteousness* away with him.

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Such a Man's Charity, if I may so call it, is somewhat like that improper kind of Donation, which the Roman Law calls, *Donatio mortis causa*. Whereby he that gave any thing did it only conditionally, *propter mortis suspicionem*, in case he should dye in his Journey, in Battel, or of the Disease under which he then laboured. He had rather indeed the Person to whom he thus gave any thing should have it, than his Heir ; but he still secur'd the propriety to himself, so long as he lived, and it many times happen'd that he lived long enough to repent of, and revoke his Donation.

Just so it is here : A Man's Will, tho' never so solemnly made, is during his Life-time, provided the use of his Reason be continued to him, changeable and ambulatory. So that he who gives any thing in one, may grow out of humour, and re-call it by another. The best and wisest of Men are very wavering and irresolute, so that no one knows what a Day may bring forth. And suppose there should be no danger in the delay, but that the former should stand unalter'd, yet *a Testament is of no strength at all, whilst the Testator liveth* ; and therefore that his design'd Charity ever takes effect, is not wholly due to his Will and Intention, but in some measure also, to that standing unchangeable Decree, whereby it is appointed for Man once to dye.

If

If you could certify him that he had longer to live, and that his Soul should not yet be requir'd of him, he would be sure to hold fast his Possessions. His Desires would increase with his Heaps, till at length they became capacious and unsatiabable as the Grave; and I make no doubt, but the same tenacious Principle, which hinders him from reaching out his hand to do good, *as he has an opportunity*, would equally influence him an hundred Years hence twice told, if we could suppose his days to be so prolonged on the Earth. Those then afford us the highest demonstration of a noble, a large and generous Soul, who settle their Charity themselves; thereby giving glory to God, before he causeth Darkness, before their Feet stumble upon the dark Mountains, and they themselves fall into the ruins of Old-age.

3. My third Consideration is this, That they who dispose of what they design for charitable Uses, *while they live*, do thereby shew, that they firmly trust in, and more entirely rely on the good Providence of God.

*The Lord (saith the Psalmist) hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.* Ps. 103  
19 His Providence extends to all the Works of the Creation, but he is said to be particularly concern'd for the Children of Men. We ought therefore to lay aside all anxious per-

plexing thoughts for to morrow, and to cast all our care upon him, who has promis'd *not to leave us, nor forsake us.* And the best way to evidence this our reliance upon the good Providence of God, is to make him a plentiful return of his own Bounties, and to do good proportionably to our Ability with what we at present enjoy.

*Eccl. 13.*  
5.

We ought to remember, that a considerable part of our blessed Lord's divine Sermon upon the Mount, was design'd to remove our doubts concerning the things of this Life; that we might not be troubled or discompos'd, as the Heathens were, with fearful apprehensions of future wants.

We may learn from thence, that our Life is more than Meat, and our Body than Raiment; and therefore we may surely conclude, that God who is so able, and so kind as to give the one, cannot be unable, neither will he be backward to give the other. We cannot but observe, that the Fowls of the Air are plentifully fed, though they contribute nothing to their own support; and that the Lilies of the Field, which do neither toil nor spin, are yet so richly arrayed, that they exceed *Solomon* in all his glory. And having such demonstrative Arguments of God's Providence, over Beings of an inferior Class, we may be very confident that his



his watchful eye is over Man, who being made in his own Image, is the perfection and masterpiece of this lower World.

The case of the *Gentiles* was far otherwise: the Idols they adored were Wood and Stone, the work of Men's hands; which they saw stood in need of the help and protection of their *Votaries*, whose wants they were ignorant of, and so could by no means be thought able to supply them; upon this account it was no great wonder, that they were so very solicitous for themselves. But if we, who worship the true living God, who understands all our necessities before we ask, and has promis'd in his due time to relieve them; if we should continue to disquiet our selves about distant Events, and future Contingencies, it might justly be thought, that we have not learned CHRIST so perfectly as we should, and that this distrust of ours proceeds from a very great weakness, if not from a total want of Faith. And as there is some reason to suspect, that the same evil distrustful Heart is in those, who defer their Charity *till they dye*, so the best method of removing all just grounds of such a suspicion, is to be rich in good Works *while they live*. For he that disperseth abroad, and is glad to distribute to the necessities of others, gives all the World a satisfactory and convincing Proof, that  
he

he firmly believes in God, and entirely depends upon his never-failing Providence, for the supply of his own.

4. I desire it may be considered by *Men of Ability*, that the disposing of their Charity *while they live*, may conduce very much to the raising of their Affections from things below, and placing them on things above. The conversation of all true Christians is in Heaven, *Col. 3. 2.* there they ought to set their Affections, even while they sojourn upon Earth. For they are but Strangers and Pilgrims here below, and therefore they must not irregularly love the World, neither the things of the World. *If* *1 Joh. 2. 15.* *any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* The Friendship of the World is direct irreconcilable enmity against God, and an immoderate desire of earthly Enjoyments is the root of all evil. We can't serve God and Mammon.

Would we be able then to wean our Thoughts from all that looks great and inviting here? Would we be able to raise our Minds to an heavenly frame and temper? The way and means hereto, is to return our Money into the other *Mat 6. 20, 21.* World. *Lay up* (saith our Saviour) *for your selves treasures in Heaven, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* Wherever we are, our Affections will always point to-



toward the beloved Object, and whilst our Treasures are those of this World, we shall not easily be brought to be intent on the next. But if we do good with what we possess, we are then said to *lend unto the Lord* ; and it will be no difficult matter to elevate our Desires, and to fix them on Heaven, when once we have remitted our Treasure thither. Then we shall be wholly at leisure for Divine Contemplations, never to be interrupted or distracted by any of those Casualties, which trouble the thoughts of the Children of this World. *There will be no moth, nor rust to corrupt, no secret or avowed thieves to break through and steal.* And whereas the most cautious and subtle Usurer upon Earth is sometimes cheated and disappointed ; they who give credit to the sovereign Lord of all, need fear no disadvantageous Compositions, no shuffling or discount : they are sure of receiving their own again with usury, either an hundred-fold in this World, or in the World to come Everlasting Life.

5. It is worthy the consideration of *Men of Ability*, That by disposing of their own Charity, they will in all probability derive a Blessing upon themselves for the remainder of their Lives. Righteous and Merciful Men are the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, and by a secret and undiscerned Providence, all things are made  
to

to work together for their good. *Lose thy money* (saith the Son of *Syrach*) *for thy brother and thy friend, and let it not rust under a stone to be lost. Lay up thy treasure, according to the commandments of the most High, and it shall bring thee more profit than gold. Shut up alms in thy store-houses, and it shall deliver thee from all affliction. It shall fight for thee against thy enemies, better than a mighty shield and strong spear, Ecclus. 29.*

As for what the poor Miser objects, That Charity is wholly inconsistent with our temporal Interest, and that by doing good to others we shall in a short time impoverish our selves and our Families; 'tis spoken with as much ease, and as little reason, as other Calumnies are, by Men who dare speak any thing but what is true, and do any thing but what is good.

*The Royal Psalmist was a Man of Years and Experience, when he declared, That he had never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. And his Son Solomon, so justly celebrated for his Wisdom, observed, that there was that made himself rich, and yet had nothing, and there was that made himself poor, and yet had great riches. And again, that there was that scattered, and yet increased, and there was that with-held more than was meet, and it tend-*  
ed

*Psal. 37.  
25.*

*Prov. 13  
7.*

*ed to poverty. That the liberal soul was made* Prov. 11  
*fat, and he that watered, was watered also* 24, 25  
*himself.* Our Heavenly Father, who is the  
 Fountain and onely dispenser of all Plenty, and  
 from whom alone *every good gift cometh*, is al- Jam. 1.  
 ways able, and does many times reward the 17  
 liberal Man with temporal Blessings, improving  
 every Alms which he gives, like the Oyl in the 1 King. 17. 16.  
 poor Widow's Cruse, which was so far from  
 failing, that it increased in spending, and grew  
 more by being consumed.

I own this is not universally true: the cha-  
 ritable Man does not always meet with a pro-  
 portionable recompence in this World. But  
 then it should be farther considered, that when  
 it pleases God otherwise to order things, and to  
 fail him in his returns here, he has for his se-  
 curity the Promise of him who is Truth it self,  
 with whom is *no variableness or shadow of*  
*turning*, that he shall be amply rewarded at  
 Resurrection of the Just.

And besides all this, if we should farther sup-  
 pose that God, for the tryal of his Patience, or  
*out of very faithfulness, should cause him to be*  
*troubled*: If he should suffer by any common  
 Calamity, if any fatal Change, any sudden ex-  
 traordinary Revolution of State should reach  
 him among others; in a word, if *poverty should*  
*overtake him like an armed man*, yet he has

this apparent advantage over the unmerciful Worldling, that the good deeds which he has done, will recommend him to the liberality of others, and the *light afflictions*, which he here indures, *will procure him a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. 4. 17.

6. And lastly, It ought to be considered by Men of Ability, that the Reflection upon what good they have done, *in their Life*, will afford them great comfort and satisfaction, when they come to dye. This is as important a Consideration as can well be, for the thoughts of this great Change do naturally affright and disturb the Soul, which never stands in more need of comfort, than at the time of its separation. The best Men, when they are laid on the Bed of Sickness, feel some disorder within, some doubts arising concerning their Salvation; they are perplexed and divided between Hope and Fear, Nature and Grace. Now the most effectual way of removing these disquietudes, and of procuring rest for our Souls at the hour of Death, is to reflect upon what good we have done in the healthful and vigorous part of our Lives.

1 Tim. Alms are a lasting *foundation*, and a sure Pledge  
 6 12. of Peace and Tranquillity; and good Works,  
 which are done out of an unfeign'd Faith in Je-  
 1 Pet. sus Christ, will deliver from Death, and contri-  
 4. 3. bute very much to *the covering a multitude of*  
*sins.*

*sins.* 'I do not remember (*saieth St. Jerom*) <sup>Ad Nr.</sup>  
 'that I have read, that ever any charitable <sup>poet.</sup>  
 'Person dyed an evil Death; for having the  
 Holy Spirit for his Comforter, a good Consci-  
 ence for his Testimony, and CHRIST for his  
 Advocate, he can with cheerfulness commit  
 his Soul to God, as to a faithful Creator. 'Tis  
 a mighty ease and refreshment to him, to re-  
 member, that he has clothed the Naked, fed  
 the Hungry, entertain'd the Stranger, and visi-  
 ted those that were sick and in Prison; and  
 to consider withal, that whatsoever kindness  
 or mercy he has shew'd to his necessitous  
 Neighbour, will be as well accepted by Christ,  
 as if it had been immediately done unto him-<sup>Mat. 25.</sup>  
 self. If amidst these joyful composing Reflecti-<sup>40.</sup>  
 ons, the great Enemy and Accuser of Mankind  
 should raise any distrustful thoughts in his  
 Heart, he can presently fly for refuge to the  
*Father of Mercies*, who knows and pities his  
 Infirmities, and who will the rather deliver him  
 because he observes his Confidence is ballanced  
 with Reverence, Humility and Godly Fear.

As for cruel uncharitable Men, it is not  
 so with them; at the approach of Death, when  
*the terrors of the Lord set themselves in array* <sup>Job 6. 4</sup>  
*against them*, fearfulness and trembling comes  
 upon them, and an horrible dread overwhelms  
 them; they are *like the troubled sea, which* <sup>Isa. 57.</sup>



*cannot rest.* The sensual Delights which they heretofore so eagerly pursued, can now entertain or divert them no more, neither will their Treasures of Wickedness profit them in this day of wrath. They may look for some to have pity on them, but they will find none; none that can redeem their Souls, or make an Agreement with God for them. They are left perfectly as Men without Hope, which is certainly the most miserable condition they can be in on this side Hell. They remember that they many times stopped their ears, and turned their faces from the poor and needy, and therefore they conclude that the face of the Lord will be turned away from them: and as they shewed no mercy, so they are under *a certain fearful looking for of judgment without mercy.* The bitterness of their Souls makes them long for Death, and yet the fence of approaching Vengeance makes them afraid to dye. I shall conclude this Consideration with the words of the truly pious Bishop *Taylor*: ‘Certain it is, (saith he) God cannot, will not, never did reject a charitable Person in his greatest needs and most passionate Prayers. For God himself is Love, and every degree of Charity that dwells in us is the participation of the Divine Nature: and therefore when upon our Death-bed a cloud covers our Head, and we are enwrapped with  
‘for-

*Holy  
Dying,*  
P. 52.

' sorrow, when we feel the weight of a sickness,  
 ' and do not feel the refreshing Visitations of  
 ' God's Loving-kindness, when we have many  
 ' things to trouble us, and looking round about  
 ' us, we see no Comforter; then we should call  
 ' to mind, what Injuries we have forgiven, how  
 ' apt we were to pardon all Affronts and real  
 ' Persecutions, how we embraced Peace when  
 ' it was offered us, how we followed after Peace  
 ' when it ran from us: and when we are weary  
 ' of one side, we should turn upon the other,  
 ' and remember the Alms, that by the Grace  
 ' of God, and his assistances, we have done, and  
 ' look up to God, and with the eye of Faith  
 ' behold him coming in the Clouds, and pro-  
 ' nouncing the sentence of Dooms-day, accord-  
 ' ing to his Mercies, and our Charity.

From what has been said, I think 'tis evident,  
 that it is upon several accounts more advisable  
 for *Men of Ability* to dispose of what they in-  
 tend for charitable Uses *in their Life time*, than  
 to leave it to be manag'd by others after their  
*Death*. I proceed now in the

2. Second place to shew, That *Men of Ability*  
 are strictly oblig'd to do good *while they live*.  
 I shall not here undertake exactly to state how  
 much good every Man ought to do, indeed it  
 cannot nicely be determined. There is a great  
 difference in the Conditions and Abilities of  
 Men;



Men ; some want much more than others to support themselves handsomely, according to the Station or Office they are in, or to maintain or educate their Children agreeably to their Birth and Quality. There cannot be one standing measure of Charity common to all ; and since it has not pleased God under the Christian Dispensation, to assign any particular proportion, every Man must be left to the direction of his own Conscience herein. All that I am about to prove then is this, That they who are able, ought *according to their Ability*, to do good if they have an *opportunity, while they live*.

This will appear from the consideration of the Circumstances they are in, and the relation they bear to the supreme Lord of all the World.

1 Cor. 4. 7. *For who made them to differ from others ? or what have they, which they have not received ?*

The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof ; the richest of Men are only Stewards and Trustees under him. The many Talents they possess, and all the special and eminent Blessings they enjoy above others, are derived from the Fountain of his all-sufficient and overflowing Goodness. Therefore they must be employ'd according to his Will, and agreeably to those great and noble ends for which they were originally granted ; such as are the Glory of God, and the assistance of their Fellow-Creatures.

And

And whether at all, or how far they have improved the Advantages here afforded them, will be strictly enquired into at the great Day of Retribution. Then *they must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*, then the Almighty's Book of Remembrance will be opened, all Men will be called to give an account of their Stewardship, and will be rewarded or punished according to their Works. They will not then be judged by their bare Intentions, or conditional Resolutions, which through their own fault never took effect; neither will it be enquired, what good they have remotely designed, but what they have actually done, when they *were alive, and had an opportunity of doing it*. The time of Life is the only proper season for exercising those Talents they are intrusted with: *The living, the living, they may praise God, and honour him with their substance*, but in Death who remembers the Poor? or how can a Man be charitable in the Grave? Unless therefore *Men of Ability* will be content to be reckoned among the negligent or unfaithful Stewards, either among such as hide their Talents, and make no use at all of them, or among such as abuse them to the dishonour of their Master, they must search out for, at least lay hold of every opportunity of improving them *while they live*.

I know

I know such as get all that they can, and keep all that they can get, may say at the last gasp, That tho' they have done no good *in their Life time*, yet they have all along resolv'd it, and according to these Resolutions, their Charity will commence after their Death. To this I answer, first, That Resolution is in its own nature an imperfect Act, and therefore can signify nothing without Performance and Consummation; unless it be where a sudden Death, or some unforeseen, irremoveable Impediment has hindred it. So that this Resolution will prove an Argument against themselves: for if they were not convinc'd of the absolute necessity of doing good, why did they ever resolve it? and if they were, certainly they cannot imagine meerly to resolve it, will be sufficient. Secondly, As for their Charity commencing after their death, I dare not encourage any one to depend upon it, who might as conveniently have employed it himself. I am sure our blessed Saviour frequently presseth his Disciples, *to work while it is day*, i. e. *while they live*, because the Night of Death cometh, *when no man can work*. And from that most solemn description of the last Judgment, wherein he peculiarly recommends to us all the acts of Compassion and Mercy, I find no mention made of resolving to clothe the Naked, to feed the Hungry, to visit the Sick.

[ 27 ]  
Sick, and the like, nor any great grounds to hope, that a *Death-bed Charity*, which might as well have been settled in the *Life* of the Donour, will be accepted by him. Nay rather, upon an attentive and indifferent view of that account of the Process of the last Judgment, we may conclude, that to him that hath an *opportunity* of doing good *while he lives*, and doth it not, to him it will be sin.

I would not here be mistaken, and therefore I must a little farther explain my self, which I cannot better do than in the words of a late Author, in his *Practical Discourse concerning Death*. 'It is the good (saith he) we do while <sup>Dr. Sherlock, P. 288.</sup> we live, that shall be rewarded, and therefore  
' we must take care to do good while we live. It  
' is well when Men, who do no good while they  
' live, will remember to do some good when they  
' dye. But if God should accept such Presents  
' as these, yet it will make great abatements in  
' the Account, that they kept their Riches  
' themselves as long as they could, and would  
' part with nothing to God, till they could keep  
' it no longer. The case is different as to those  
' who did all the good they could while they  
' lived, and when they saw they could live no  
' longer, took care to do good after death: Such  
' surviving Charities as these prolong our Lives,  
' and add daily to our Account; when such  
E ' Men

‘ Men are removed into the other World, they  
‘ are doing good in this World still; they have  
‘ a stock a going below, the increase and im-  
‘ provements of which will follow them into  
‘ the other World. *Blessed are the dead which  
thus dye in the Lord.* I come now in the

3. Third place to speak of the peculiar excel-  
lency and usefulness of those charitable Settle-  
ments, which are design’d to promote and en-  
courage Learning. These I conceive excel other  
kinds of Charity in two respects:

1. Because the Benefit of them reaches to  
the Soul, as well as to the Body.

2. Because the whole Kingdom reaps advan-  
tage by these, whereas several other kinds of  
Charity terminate in particular Persons, or in  
one Body or Society.

1. The Benefits of those charitable Settle-  
ments, which are designed to promote and en-  
courage Learning, reach to the Soul, as  
well as the Body. To do good to our Bre-  
thren in any respect or capacity, is very com-  
mendable; but since the Soul is the better part  
of the Man, ’tis proportionably a more noble  
design to provide for that, than for the Body.  
The wants of the Mind are most importunate,  
and the necessities of the Flesh may be better  
born, or more easily supply’d, than those of  
the Spirit. Hunger and Nakedness are not of  
fo



so fatal a consequence, as Ignorance and Error, and however mean the Accommodations of the Body are, *that the soul be without knowledge is not good.* <sup>Prov. 12</sup> 'Tis better to be poor, than unlearned. This, I suppose, will look like a Paradox, but I truly believe it was the opinion of the most eminent among the ancient Philosophers, who in a right sence despis'd Dominions, and slighted Dignities, being chiefly careful about regulating and improving their intellectual Faculties. They knew, that to have their Understandings clear, and free from prejudice and error, to be able to think methodically, and argue closely, to have their Wills set strait, and their Affections under the conduct and discipline of Reason, was a Perfection and Happiness, wherein they excell'd the generality of Mankind, as much as some in human shape do the Beasts that perish. And here let us suppose a Child to be born in the Wilderness, to grow up to Manhood without any instruction and information, to have no notices of things, no rules and directions for the government of his Life communicated to him by others; verily there would not be a more miserable Creature upon the face of the Earth. We should find him dull and stupid, froward and obstinate, churlish, barbarous and untractable; ignorant, and yet hating instruction, unable to judge a-

right, and therefore easily to be seduced; vain and roving in all his imaginations, and violent in the pursuit of his pleasures, neither fearing God, nor regarding Man, without discretion, without civility, without humanity it self. In short, this *mere Animal* of such wild, desert, uncultivated Manners, would be useless to himself, and an intolerable burden to all about him. *For sand, and salt, and a mass of iron, are easier to bear, than a man without understanding,* Ecclus. 22. 15.

Upon this consideration of the great inconveniencies, and manifest evils the want of Learning and Instruction exposeth Men to, some have made it a question, Whether they were more oblig'd to them from whom they had their Being, than to those who gave them their Education. Others, tho' they have not gone so far, have yet remarkably honoured those, who by guiding and directing them in their tender Years, contributed to the rectifying and exalting their Natures. Others again to shew their esteem of Learning, have encouraged and rewarded it in those that have been Strangers, and profess'd Enemies to them. Thus when *Alexander* had taken and plundered *Thebes*, he spared the House and Family of *Pindar*, *Summum in doctos favorem manifestissim-*  
*Suppl. in* *Q. Curt. mo exemplo testatus.* And though the *Romans* suffered



suffered by the Inventions of *Archimedes*, yet *Marcellus* to evidence how much he was concern'd at his Death, ordered a Sepulchre for a memorial of him ; which being over-run with Brambles, was restored by *Cicero* after the space of an hundred and thirty Years. Many more Instances of this nature might be produc'd, both from ancient and modern Histories ; but since all civiliz'd Nations are already agreed, that Instruction is the very life of the Soul, more need not be said to prove, that those charitable Settlements which are design'd to promote and encourage Learning, do peculiarly excel most others, because the benefit of them reaches to the Soul as well as to the Body.

*Livii*  
lib. 25.  
cap. 31.

2. Whereas several kinds of Charity terminate in particular Persons, or in one Body or Society, the whole Kingdom reaps advantage from those Settlements, which are design'd to promote and encourage Learning. This advantage is much every way, we will briefly consider it first,

1. In time of Peace, which is therefore reckoned so great a Blessing, because of that security it gives to all Ranks and Conditions of Men at home, and the free liberty of Trade and Commerce abroad. In both which respects those Foundations that promote and encourage Learning are very advantageous and useful. In these

these all liberal Sciences are taught and improved, and there are none of the inferiour manual Arts, that serve to provide Man with Food and Raiment, or do otherwise minister to the necessities and conveniencies of Life, but what receive some benefit from hence. The Masters of them being enabled by Arithmetick, and some Rules of the Mechanicks, to proceed with less charge, and more ease and expedition, at least with more certainty in the business of their respective Callings. In these also Men of higher Quality and better Parts, have all imaginable opportunities of leisure, Books, and Conversation, whereby, if they are not extremely wanting to themselves, they may in due time become useful in their Generation, and capable of doing God and their Country service, either in the Church, or in the State, in the Court, or at the Bar. In a word, Take away those helps to Learning and Knowledge, such charitable Settlements as we are now speaking of afford, and Peace it self would only serve, like the quiet silence of the Night, to lull us fast asleep, and to let us more insensibly slide backward into that profound, universal Ignorance, which we now pity in others, and from which we of this Nation have not yet many Ages been delivered.

And then for Trade and Commerce with other Nations, who are as different from us in  
their

their Language and Customes, as they are remote in their Climate, I shall take the boldness to affirm, that they may doubt of, or deny any thing, who either do not see, or through prejudice will not acknowledge how much this Island is engaged to those, who by a right use of the means and opportunities of studying charitably reached out to them, have very far advanced several useful parts of Learning, particularly Astronomy, Geography and Navigation.

2. Let us consider how far these Settlements which are made for the encouragement of Learning, advantage the whole Kingdom, in relation to War. 'Tis manifest, if we would succeed herein, we must not only have disciplin'd Soldiers, but also skilful Mathematicians, and expert Engineers; such the *Royal Society*, and the *Two Universities* have, and I trust always will afford us. Besides, the Arts of War being vastly improved, an ordinary skill and policy, or a little acquaintance with our own Affairs, will stand us in no great stead. Our Generals must be able to look back and make judicious remarks upon the noble Exploits, and cunning Stratagems of those ancient Nations, which have heretofore been Nations of renown. Lastly, since the end we ought to propose when we make War, is an honourable and a lasting Peace,  
we

we ought to have Men of Years and Observation, to deliberate of, and manage so weighty a Concern; Men that understand the Laws of Nature, and of Nations, and the undoubted Rights and Interest of our own, as well as the Strength, the Constitution, and Pretences of those Kingdoms, with whom they are to treat. Now how far these Foundations, which are design'd to promote and encourage Learning, have contributed to the supplying this Nation with Men thus useful, thus absolutely necessary in its greatest exigencies, may be easily understood if we will but consult the Lives of the wisest Statesmen, the most eminent Commanders, and the most famous Admirals, that are mentioned in our English Annals.

I know very well what a hideous out-cry was made some years ago by the *Quakers*, and other *illiterate Enthusiasts*, against all liberal Sciences, all skill in the Tongues, and Histories, against all Books, but the Bible; against the Schools of the Prophets, and all Universities, as Heathenish, Anti-christian, Marks of the *Beast*, as deformities, darkenings, impertinencies, &c. But I shall not say one word at present to their *Testimony*, as they call it, partly because all that has been urged against humane Learning has been particularly considered by others, but chiefly because the *Cry* of these  
Men

Men is not now so great, they having got some measure of that Knowledge among themselves, which before they condemned as *rags* and *tatters* in us.

Thus much may suffice concerning the third thing I propos'd to speak of, namely, the peculiar Excellency and Usefulness of those charitable Settlements, which are design'd to promote and encourage Learning. I shall therefore go on in the

4. Fourth and last place, to enquire very briefly what is the Duty of all those who more immediately enjoy the Benefit of such Foundations.

1<sup>st</sup>. Then, they who more immediately enjoy the Benefit of such Foundations, ought to set apart some time for the solemn *Commemoration* of their *Founders* and *Benefactors*, to assert the Honour, and report the Praises of those famous Men, who have been the Instruments of so much good to Mankind, and by whom the Lord has wrought so great glory. The remembrance of Righteous Men should be always fresh on the minds of them, who have received good at their hands, and they should be telling of their Liberality from day to day. As they were honour'd in their Generations, and were the glory of their Times, so care should be taken that their Names may live for evermore, that



[ 37 ]

Posterity may understand the noble Works which they have done, and the Children, who are yet unborn, may call them Blessed.

If we look back on the accounts of former times, since Man was plac'd upon the Earth, we shall find, that *they who have done well, have had praise of the same*. The Heathens had publick Oration, and anniversary Feasts in memory of those who had wrought any great Deliverance for them, or who had been the inventers, or promoters of any useful Arts or Sciences. The Jews also did Honour to worthy Persons at their Death, and never mentioned them afterward, without a Blessing on their Memory. And the Christians in the several Ages of the Church, have not only had set Speeches in commendation of Men eminent for their Piety and Charity, but have also recorded their good Works, that they might be had in perpetual remembrance. This they saw was a likely Method of infusing excellent Principles into the Living, and of exciting and provoking them to an holy and laudable Emulation of the Dead. Since therefore they who enjoy the Benefit of others Bounty and Liberality, have the example of all Nations to engage them, and of all the Ages of the World to warrant their paying the easy Tribute of Praise to their *Benefactors*, it would be an argument of very great Ingrat-



[ 57 ]

Ingratitude, if they should suffer their Memorial to perish, as though they had never been. All that I shall farther add on this Head is, that they must beware their Gratitude does not degenerate into Superstition, and that when they are celebrating the Charity and Beneficence of Men, they do not forget to give Glory to GOD, who is chiefly to be respected in all the returns they make to his Creatures: *For his Name alone is excellent, and his Praise above heaven and earth.* Psal. 148. 13.

2. It is the Duty of all those who enjoy the Benefit of such charitable Settlements, to take good heed that they make a right use of them, that they so improve their time, and all other Advantages, that they may in some measure answer the pious Designs of their *Founders*, and the just Expectations of their *Country*. They must not think such Provision is made for them, only that they may with the less concern for to morrow, *sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to play*; or that the Liberality of their Benefactors was intended as a cloake for, or an occasion of Sloth and Idleness, Pride and Vanity, Intemperance and Disorder. If they would discharge themselves as they ought, they must be Sober, Modest, Humble, Devout and Industrious; manifesting by the whole Course of their Lives and Conversations, that they have a due

fence of the extraordinary Encouragements reach'd out to them, through the want whereof many Men of great natural Parts, have been determin'd to the Spade, the Hammer, or the Plough; and so their whole Lives being taken up in a laborious pursuit of those things which are necessary for the satisfying and supporting of their Bodies, their Minds have been neglected, and they themselves unfit for those higher and more noble Employments, which a liberal Education would have qualify'd them for.

Ecclus.  
32.

*How can he get wisdom (saith the Son of Syrach) that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad? that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks? or the carpenter, or they that cut and grave seals, or the potter that turneth the wheel about with his feet, or the smith sitting by the anvil, who fighteth with the heat of the furnace, and has the noise of the hammer and the anvil ever in his ears? All these want that leisure and retirement, which are necessary to the getting of Learning and Knowledge, and therefore it is not expected, that they should be able to declare Justice and Judgment, or that they should fit themselves for standing before Princes, or sitting high in the Congregation. But of them to whom much is given, and for whom liberal Men have devised liberal things, both God and Men*

Men *will require the more*. Whatever Talents they are intrusted with, whatever opportunities of Learning they now enjoy, they must hereafter give an account of them, and therefore they ought faithfully to manage, and industriously to improve them here, by a constant vigorous application to such Studies, as may *edify*, not *puff up*; *fill*, but not *swell* the Mind; such as may promote the Glory of God, their own Salvation, and render them serviceable and beneficial to the Publick. For really a man may be idly and unprofitably busy, he may rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of Carefulness, and all this while only labour for the Wind, and serve no other ends but those of Folly and Vanity. And 'tis altogether as good to all the purposes of a civil or religious Life, to fold our Arms, and do nothing, as to squander away our time, and exercise our Parts about trifles and things of no value. To conclude, Not he that knows *much*, but he that knows what is *most useful*, is, and always will be, accounted the *Best Scholar*, and the *Wiseest Man*.

F I N I S.

ADVER-

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

SIR Thomas Cookes of *Bently*, in the County of *Worcester*, Baronet, hath built at *Bromsgrove* in the same County, a large and convenient School-house, with a very good Dwelling-house for a School-Master. And by Deed bearing date *June 22. 1693.* settled on Feoffees *50 l. per An.* for ever, freed from all Taxes and Payments, for the said School in this manner, viz. *20 l. per An.* to a School-Master, nominated by Sir Thomas and his Heirs, and Licensed by the Bishop of *Worcester*, to instruct 12 poor Boys in Learning and Religion, as established in the Church of *England*, to be admitted into the School between 9 and a 11 Years old, and continue at School 6 Years at least; *16 l. per An.* to buy them Cloaths, viz. Blew Coats, Caps, &c. *10 s. per An.* to buy them Books; *10 s. per An.* for Prayers and a Sermon at *Bromsgrove* Church on the 1st of *May*, when the Feoffees are to meet for managing the said Charity, and *1 l.* for their Entertainment yearly on that day; and the *12 l.* remaining, to be kept as a Stock for placing out the said Boys Apprentices, not allowing to any one Boy above *12 l.* appointing excellent Rules for the good ordering of the whole Affair.

He also gives the present School-Master *20 l. more per An.* for Preaching a Sermon every Lord's day in the Afternoon at *Tardebig*, Sir Thomas's Parish-Church, two Miles from *Bromsgrove*; and further, he gives *10 l. per An.* to an Usher in the said School.

He hath likewise by Deed, dated about the *24* of *March, 1695.* settled on Feoffees *50 l. per An.* for ever, freed from all Taxes and Payments, for a School at *Feckenham* in the said County, appointing a School-Master and 12 poor Boys, with the same Allowances, in the same Manner, and under the same Rules, with *Bromsgrove* forementioned, only fixing *Thursday* in *Whitsun-week*, for the Yearly Meeting of the Feoffees at *Feckenham*.

2 Cor. 9. 6.

*He which soweth bountifully,  
shall reap also bountifully.*

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